



Spring 2011

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Advance Planning	1
Building	2
Project Planning	3
MSCP	4
Code Enforcement	5



Shades of Undercover Boss! DPLU Director Eric Gibson recently traded places with one of his counter staff to help raise donations for County charities. Check out this County Television Network video!

San Diego County DPLU News

From the Director

Hello everyone,

Welcome to the spring edition of the Department of Planning and Land Use's (DPLU) quarterly newsletter. We've had an exciting few months and we have a lot to tell you about. In April, the Board of Supervisors voted 4-1 to direct us to complete the final documents for the General Plan Update and bring them back to the Board in August for consideration. We've also added new customer services, improved our processes and achieved new Code Enforcement success stories!

As always, DPLU is striving to be the best land use department it can be.

Until next time,

Eric Gibson, Director, Department of Planning and Land Use

Advance Planning

General Plan Update

Supervisors Direct Staff to Prepare GP Update's Final Documents

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors has scheduled to reconvene the General Plan Update hearing Aug. 3, after taking several significant actions at its April 13 meeting.

Among its actions, the Board voted 4-1 to direct DPLU staff to prepare the final documents that would be needed to adopt the General Plan Update plan as recommended, and to bring those documents to the Board for consideration Aug. 3.

Other actions the Board took included:

- The Board voted to approve minor changes to several specific properties on the staff-recommended land-use map.
- The Board voted to incorporate changes to several policies, including:
 - Leaving the County's existing General Plan Amendment process unchanged.
 - Modifying references to Community Plans.
 - Removing "Road 3A" in Valley Center from the Circulation Element.

For more information about the General Plan Update, please go to: <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/index.html>.



Spring 2011

Did you know?

DPLU got a nice customer service "shout out" from San Diego Union Tribune columnist Tom Blair in his March 20 column! Blair applauded DPLU for giving customers the chance to watch the San Diego State Aztec's men's basketball team's march through the NCAA tournament on the televisions in DPLU's lobby. "Things we thought we'd never see:" Blair wrote, "Aztecs Fever met customer service at San Diego County's planning department on Thursday, as touted in this tweet: 'March Madness begins! Watch the games --- including SDSU's --- while you process your permits at DPLU's counters at the Kearny Mesa offices!"

Thanks Tom!

Here's the link to Blair's full column:

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/2011/mar/20/aztecs-win-was-the-icing-on-his-cake/>

Important Building Division Telephone Numbers

Building Offices: (858) 694-2960

Toll Free: (800) 411-0017

2003, 2007 Wildfire Survivors:

(858) 694-3876

San Diego County

DPLU News

Building Division News

DPLU Posts Counter Wait Times in Lobby for Customers

DPLU added another new service to help customers in March: an electronic billboard in its Kearny Mesa lobby that shows the up-to-the-minute wait times for its land use counters.

The department had already been posting its counter wait times on the Internet --- both "real-time" waits and charts showing the average wait times taken from the previous month at DPLU's various land-use counters. The idea was to help customers avoid long waits by giving them the tools to plan ahead and choose the least-busy times to visit DPLU's offices. Now, posting the wait times in the lobby will take the guess work out for customers and make it easier for them relax when they visit DPLU to conduct their business.

DPLU Processes San Pasqual Academy Fire Rebuild

DPLU's Building Division helped clear the path in March to start the rebuilding of more than 20 residences and administrative buildings at the San Pasqual Academy that were destroyed by the 2007 wildfires.

DPLU has provided "fast-track" processing and waived building-permit fees to help fire survivors from both the 2003 and 2007 firestorms rebuild.

In the San Pasqual Academy's case, the Building Division completed its review of numerous plan checks and issued building permits in March for the estimated \$9.15 million project, which is expected to construct nearly 25,000 square feet of residential space and 21 "green" buildings at the foster school. The rebuild project includes three duplex's, two four-family homes, three single-family homes for school staff members and a 6,000 square foot administration building. Building permits were also issued to construct three detached garages, trash enclosures and lighting. The San Diego County Board of Supervisors approved spending \$9.15 million in insurance money to pay for the project in November 2010. The San Pasqual Academy's 250-acre school site is owned by the County and run by a collaboration that includes the County's Health and Human Services Agency, New Alternatives, Inc., the San Diego County Office of Education and the San Diego Workforce partnership. The school provides a year-round curriculum high school program and health care services to more than 180 foster students.

[Back to Page One](#)



Spring 2011

San Diego County DPLU News

Project Planning

Important Project Planning Links:

- [California Environmental Quality Act \(CEQA\) Flow Chart](#)
- [Conditions of Approval Manual](#)
- [Developer Deposits](#)
- [Discretionary Permits and Application Forms](#)
- [Environmental Impact Report Guidelines](#)
- [Fee Schedule](#)
- [How Much Discretionary Permits Cost; How Much Time they Take](#)

DPLU Dramatically Improves Minor Deviation Process

Every year, DPLU works with customers, reviews and approves thousands of building permits, and processes discretionary projects to bring them to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for consideration. But it also constantly studies how to improve its processes --- to make them easier, better and faster for county residents.

Last quarter, the department dramatically slashed the processing time for its Minor Deviation applications, from an average of 3 1/2 months to just six days! The Minor Deviation process was designed to make it easier and cheaper for property owners to make minor changes to projects that had originally required County-approved Major Use Permits and Site Plans. However, over the years, for various organizational and processing reasons, the average time it took to complete Minor Deviations swelled. This was often a huge inconvenience for customers who had to wait for the process to be completed to build their properties. However, after a thorough review and a lot of brainstorming, DPLU introduced a streamlined process in February. So far, the results have been dramatic and the department expects the improved process will continue to save customers time and money.

DPLU Puts Planning Commission Meeting Recordings Online

DPLU started putting audio recordings of San Diego County Planning Commission meetings on its website in March to make it easier for county residents to follow along as the County conducts the public's business.

DPLU previously created a toll-free telephone line in 2009 that lets people listen to the Commission hearings live, as they occur. Now, the new audio recordings will let even more people follow the process. The audio recordings will be posted on the department's Planning-Commission-Agendas Web page once Commission meetings are concluded. The online recordings will be divided into sections that correspond to the individual items on the Commission's agenda, to allow listeners to easily jump forward or backward to listen to specific items. The San Diego County Planning Commission meets every other Friday to weigh land-use issues in

San Diego County's unincorporated communities, from developments to reviewing policies and regulations.

To hear the audio recordings of past Commission meetings, see:
<http://www.sdcy.org/dplu/PC/sop/index.html>

[Back to Page One](#)



Spring 2011



Photo by Steve Maslowski, Care of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Featured Species: Least Bell's vireo

Even if this quarter's featured species wasn't endangered and there were greater numbers of them, you might have a hard time seeing one! First of all, least Bell's vireos are small (that's where the "least" comes from) — they only measure about 4 1/2 inches from the tips of their beaks to the tips of their tails. Second, the tiny songbirds spend most of their time hidden in trees, especially willows along streams, and in bushes, such as the chaparral and scrub in San Diego County. Olive-gray feathered on top and pale-feathered underneath, least Bell's vireos spend their winters in Southern Mexico and migrate to Southern California near the end of March. They make their nests low to the ground — only about one meter high — and live off of insects and spiders.

In April, they lay their first eggs, about four on average. Young least Bell's vireos leave the nest just 10 to 12 days after hatching!

San Diego County DPLU News

Multiple Species Conservation Program

South County Plan

The MSCP Division is scheduled to present the MSCP's 2010 Annual Report to the Board of Supervisors in May. The annual workshop to present the report to the public is scheduled to be held from 9 a.m. to noon, June 29, at the Balboa Park Club Ballroom (near the San Diego Air and Space Museum). Staff members from MSCP, the County's Department of Parks and Recreation, the cities of San Diego and Chula Vista, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will all give updates and presentations. The workshop will focus on the MSCP's monitoring and management plans for the various species preserved by the program.

North County Plan

The MSCP Division now plans to release its revised draft North County Plan and the plan's draft environmental documents for public review this summer. The division is continuing to work on the environmental documents with consultants, state and federal wildlife agencies, and stakeholders. The public can review the draft plan, including its appendices and the public comments that were received when the draft plan was released for public review in early 2009, at <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/mscp/nc.html>.

East County Plan

Work on the East County Plan continues to be on hold. The work is intended to resume after completion of the North County Plan. Information about the draft East County Plan, including the preliminary draft preserve map, is available at: <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/mscp/ec.html>.

[Back to page one](#)



Spring 2011

[See More Code Enforcement Success Stories!](#)

[Aug. 2010: Working with a Fallbrook Owner to Clean up Construction Junk.](#)

[Aug. 2010: Working with a Vista Home-owner to Clear Away Junk.](#)

[June 2010: Working with a Property Owner in Ranchita to Clear a Scrap Yard](#)

[May 2010: Clearing a Public Health Hazard in Pala](#)

[April 2010: Cleaning and Securing an abandoned home in Spring Valley](#)

[March 2010: Removing an Illegal RV Storage Lot in Ramona](#)

[Jan. 2010: Cleaning up a foreclosure](#)

[Jan. 2010: Making a Neighborhood Safer](#)

[Dec. 2009: Tearing Down a Nuisance](#)

[Oct. 2009: Cleanup in La Mesa](#)

[March 2009: Debris Removal in Ramona](#)

San Diego County DPLU News

Code Enforcement

Tearing Down an Abandoned House and Cleaning up the Site in Spring Valley

Code Enforcement officers were able to work with a property owner in Spring Valley recently to tear down a ramshackle house and clean up the site, after initially responding to a neighbor's complaint about an abandoned home.

Officers who fielded the complaint and visited the property found the house filled with trash and unlocked, which left it open to vagrants and created a potentially unsafe spot for neighborhood kids. Once the owner was notified, they responded quickly and decided that the house was beyond repair and hired a contractor from a list supplied by the Code Enforcement officers. The contractor was able to tear down the house and completely clean up the property in just one day.



Before



After

[Back to page one](#)